## SENATE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

LANSING, MICHIGAN

For Immediate Release State Sen. Mike Prusi State Sen. Mickey Switalski State Sen. Deb Cherry June 14, 2005 517/373-7800 517/373-7315 517/373-1636

## DEMS: STATE BUDGET IGNORES MORAL OBLIGATIONS

## DEMOCRATS FIGHT FOR CHILDREN, SENIORS & DISABLED

LANSING- Senate Democrats called upon the GOP today to stop protecting special interests and pet projects and instead refocus its energies on protecting the essential needs of Michigan's citizens. Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee harshly criticized House and Senate Republicans for a budget that they say does not share the essential values of Michigan's citizens.

"This budget lacks an investment in families, our communities, and efforts to attract and retain good-paying jobs," said Sen. Prusi. "The budget in front of us represents flawed judgment and wasteful spending on behalf of special interests."

On Thursday, House Republicans passed a single omnibus budget bill that eliminates health insurance for over 40,000 citizens and creates burdensome premiums and copays for Medicaid recipients. In a quote that may come to characterize GOP indifference toward Michigan's mentally ill and disadvantaged citizens, Rep. Scott Hummel (R-DeWitt) told capitol reporters, following the House adoption of the omnibus budget bill, "I can sleep tonight. I can relax a little bit."

"I'm not sure how someone could sleep at night having just taken health insurance away from 43,000 poor and mentally ill citizens," said State Sen. Deb Cherry (D-Burton). "We have a moral obligation to assist society's most vulnerable citizens."

Democrats harshly criticized House and Senate Republicans for cuts to home and community-based waiver rates that will force seniors into expensive nursing homes as well as Medicaid spending cuts that will deprive the state of millions of dollars in federal matching funds. They also criticized cuts to at-risk students.

"Any cuts that unfairly target our most vulnerable citizens—whether it's the poor, the disabled, the unemployed—are unconscionable," said Sen. Mickey Switalski (D-Roseville). "Good schools and healthy families are essential to developing a thriving economy."